My LADY of DOUBT

By RANDALL PARRISH

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SYNOPSIS.

Major Lawrence, son of Judge Lawrence of Virginia, whose wife was a Lee, is sent on a perilous mission by Gen. Washington, just after the winter at Valley Forge. Disguised in a British uniform Lawrence arrives within the enemy's lines. The Major attends a great fete and saves the "Lady of the Blended Rose" from mob. He later meets the girl at a brilliant ball. Trouble is started over a waltz, and Lawrence is urged by his partner, Mistress Mortimer (The Lady of the Blended Rose), to make his escape. Lawrence is detected as a spy by Captain Grant of the British Army, who agrees to a duel. The duel is stopped by Grant's friends and the spy makes a dash for liberty, swimming a river following a narrow escape. The Major arrives at the shop of a blacksmith, who is friendly, and knows the Lady of the Blended Rose. Captain Grant and rangers search blacksmith shop in vain for the spy. Lawrence joins the minute men.

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

"Who are those fellows back there?" I questioned at last, made nervous by the silence.

"The boys in the gulch? Jersey militiamen," he explained shortly. "You see there's some of us that can't get away all the time, because of the women and children, and the farm work. Besides, regular soldiering don't just appeal to our sort. So we do our fighting round home in our own way. However, the most of us manage to have a hand in the real thing once in a while even at that. We were over at Germantown, and down at Brandywine. Farrell's got a commission, but the rest of us are taking our chances. It's neighbor against neighbor. Whatever we've got left has been held at the point of the rifle. We're doing our share in this war, an' Washington knows it. Over there to the east 'Red' Fagin, Old Man Kelly, an' their gangs of Pine Robbers, are making the fields red; sometimes they get down this far raiding the farms, but mostly, we're fighting foragers out of Philadelphia, and they're not much better. Half the houses in this country have been burned, and mercy isn't very common on either side. Those lads yonder are not pretty soldiers to look at, but they're wolves to fight, and hungry for it."

"They are called on whenever Farrell wishes?"

"Well, yes; those come who can. They're not always the same bunch. You see Farrell covers quite a bit of country, with a lieutenant in each section who is in touch with the neighbors there. I belong in Camden, and don't go outside very often, but there is a sort of organization all the way between here and New York. Whenever there is a big fight on, the most of us get into it somehow. Washington counts on us in a pinch, but mostly we're raiding or cutting off British supplies. Say, Major, isn't that those fellows coming?"

He pointed into the east, in which direction the road ran, barely revealed by the faint light of the moon for perhaps a hundred yards. I looked eagerly, and could dimly distinguish a vague shadow on the summit of a distant rise of land. The shadow moved, however, and as we both stared in uncertainty, there came to our ears the far-off crack of a whip. We drew farther back against the bank, pausing to make sure there was no deception. One by one we could perceive those vague shadows topping the rise and disappearing. I counted ten, convinced they were covered wagons, and then the night wind brought to us the creaking of wheels, and the sound of a man's voice. Duval's hand gripped my arm, and to the signal we crept back beyond the crest, and then hurried down to where Farrell had concealed his men. He was awaiting us in the middle of the road, his short broad figure almost laughable in the moon shadow.

"Well, are they coming?"

"Just over the crest," replied Duval brusquely. "I counted fifteen wagons."

"Quite a convoy, an' worth fighting for. Take the left, Duval; Major, come with me."

We drew aside under the protection of a boulder, from where we could see clearly to the top of the ridge. Only for a moment was there silence, the men all about us lying low in their coverts, breathless and intent. Then we heard horses' hoofs and the murmur of approaching voices.

We could see them quite clearly, as they topped the crest, the moonlight revealing men and horses so distinctly I could even guess at their uniform. Those in advance rode slowly, four abreast, down into the black shadows, lolling in their saddles, voices murmuring, seemingly unconscious of any danger. It was easy to comprehend their state of mind. Delavan had been left alone for a week, permitted to sweep the countryside unmolested. He and his command had naturally grown careless, never suspecting their every move had been watched by keen-eyed scouts. Now, guarded by Ghent's troop, they believed themselves sufficiently strong for any emergency; that no force the scattered enemy could gather would venture upon attack. By daylight they would be within sight of the Philadelphia outposts, and serenely confident in their numbers, the night march had therefore become a mere routine. I heard Farrell chuckle grimly to himself as he observed the careless approach of those advance riders.

They were the Queen's Rangers, the white facings of their coats conspicuous, their guns swung at the shoulder in reckless confidence. A slim young lieutenant appeared to be in command.

Ten wagons passed without a movement or sound from the men lying concealed almost within arm's reach of the unconscious guards. Farrell never stirred, and I scarcely ventured to breathe. Then there came a squadron of Rangers, an officer riding alone in front, the black shadow of another section of the wagon train looming over the ridge behind them. The horsemen passed us, the officer turning in his saddle with an order to close up their ranks. I recognized Grant's voice, and then, sharp as a blow, rang out Farrell's whistle at my very ear.

There was a leap of flame from both sides the road, lighting up that gash in the clay bank as though it was an inferno, the red and yellow glow cleaving the night asunder, with ear-splitting roar. I was on my feet, my rifle spitting, yet hardly conscious of any act, stunned by the suddenness of the reports, confused by those black figures leaping forward through the weird glare. I saw and heard, and yet it was all a confused medley, in which I bore active part while scarcely realizing its significance. It was a fierce hand-to-hand melee so swiftly fought as to be over with almost in a minute, and yet so desperate the narrow roadway was strewn with bodies. Frightened horses whirled and ran; wagons were overturned; hemmed in against the high walls, Germans and British made one mad effort to extricate themselves; the advance guard came spurring back, pushing blindly into the ruck, the boyish voice of their young lieutenant sounding above the uproar. But our men were between the two, a compact body, each borderman fighting independently, but knowing the game. I heard no word of command, no shout of direction from either Farrel or Duval, yet we ripped them asunder with sweeping rifle butts, and, almost before I could catch a second breath, the few who remained on their feet were helplessly trapped. Farrell saw it was all over, and his whistle sounded again, stilling the uproar. Up to that moment he was beside me; with the echoing of the shrill blast he had disappeared.

It was Duval who emerged from the wreck of the train, demanding surrender.

"Who commands here?" he shouted. "Speak up quick."

There was hesitancy, and then out of the black mass huddled against the bank I recognized Grant's voice.

"I suppose I do; has any one seen Captain Delavan?"

"He fell at the first fire, sir," answered some one huskily.

Grant stepped forth into the moonlight, bareheaded, his sword in hand.

"Then I am the senior officer," he announced, his voice shaking slightly. "Who are you?"

"Camden minute men. Do you surrender?"

He took a long breath, glancing about at the dark shadows. Some one held a lighted torch, the red flame casting a sudden gleam over the surrounding faces. It was clear that further resistance was useless, yet Grant temporized.

"Are you in command?"

"No," said Duval; "but I represent the commander."

"I deal with the one responsible in this affair and demand terms. Who is your leader?"

Duval smiled, turning his head inquiringly.

"I don't think you have much choice," he commented dryly. "However, perhaps you are not too proud to talk to a regular who outranks you—I present Major Lawrence, of the Continental Line."

Surprised as I was by being thus suddenly thrust forward into supreme authority, I as instantly understood the purpose, and stepped to the front. Grant stared at my face in the gleam of the smoking torch, almost as though he looked upon a ghost.

"You!"

"Certainly, Captain. It is a pleasure to meet with you again, especially under such happy circumstances. But my men are becoming impatient. Do you surrender?"

"Under what terms?" he parleyed.

"None, but we are not savages. You will be treated as prisoners of war."

His hatred of me made him obstinate, but the utter helplessness of their position was too apparent to be ignored. A Hessian muttered something in German, and Grant dropped the point of his sword with an oath.

"Good," I said promptly. "Lieutenant, have your men disarm the prisoners."

There was no resistance, and the militiamen herded them against the bank, encircled by a heavy guard. Duval singled out the officers from among the others, and brought them forward to where I stood. There were but three—Grant and two Hessians. I looked at them keenly, recalling the slight figure of the young lieutenant with the boy's voice. Could the lad have been shot, or what had become of him?

"Are you three all that are left?" I questioned bluntly. "Who commanded the vanguard?"

The two Hessians looked at each other stupidly, and I asked the question again before Grant saw fit to reply. His manner was excessively insolent.

"That is more than I know. We joined after dark, and I did not meet Delavan's officers."

"He vas vat you call maype a volunteer leftenant," added one of the Germans brokenly. "At Mount Holly we met, yah, and from there he joined."

"Not one of Delavan's men then?"

"I dink not; he vas Light Dragoon. I haf the vagon guard—the first vagons—an' see him there. Mine Gott! he come pack vid his mens all right—slash, shoot—his horse rear up; that vas the last I see already."

"The lad got away, with three others, sir," broke in a new voice at my back. "They wheeled and rode through us, across the water. We thought the horse guard would get them over there, but I guess they didn't; anyhow there was no firing. The fellows must have turned in under the bank, and rode like hell."

Satisfied as to this incident, and not altogether regretful that the boy had thus escaped, I held a short consultation with Duval, seeking explanation as to why the command had been so unceremoniously thrust upon me. A few words only were required to make the situation clear. Farrell's ability to injure and annoy the enemy largely depended on his leadership not being known. While taking part in every engagement, he always required his lieutenants to represent him in negotiations, so that up to this time, whatever the British might suspect, they had no positive proof that he was openly in arms against them. Duval, in turn, taking advantage of my presence, had shifted the responsibility to my shoulders.

"But what do you people do with your prisoners?" I asked.

"Send 'em to the Continental lines when we can," he explained, "and if we can't then turn 'em loose. No use paroling 'em, as they consider us guerillas. If I was you I'd run 'em back to the farm house across the creek, an' hold 'em there till we get rid of this stuff. Maybe it'll take twenty-four hours to hide it all, and burn the wagons. Then the boys can turn 'em loose, an' there's no harm done. I'd like to take that fellow Grant into our lines—he's a mean pillaging devil—but it's too big a risk; Bristol is about the nearest picket post, and the redcoats have got cavalry patrols all along in back of the river."

"It Is a Pleasure to Meet With You Again, Especially Under Such Happy Circumstances. Do You Surrender?"

"But I cannot wait here," I answered, impatiently. "Farrell understood that. I have important information for Washington, and only came with you tonight because you were following along my route. I've got to go on."

"That's all right; just give your orders, and we'll attend to the rest. What we want is for these lads to go back to Philadelphia saying they were attacked by a force of militia under command of an officer of the Continental line. That will give Clinton a scare, and turn suspicion away from us. Grant knows you, I understand, so he'll report the affair that way. You can be off within thirty minutes."

It was easy to grasp the point of view, and I saw no reason for refusing assistance. I gave the necessary orders, standing under the torchlight in full view, and waited while a squad of partisans rounded up the disarmed prisoners, and guarded them down the slope to the edge of the stream. Teams were doubled up, and several of the heavy wagons rumbled away into the darkness. Two, too badly injured to be repaired, were fired where they lay, the bright flames lighting up the high banks on either side the road. I found a big black horse, with British arms on the bridle, and a pair of loaded pistols in the holsters, a fine-looking animal, and came back into the fire glow, determined to lose no more time. Duval had disappeared, but, as I stood there looking about for him to say good-bye, a young country fellow came up hurriedly from out the darkness.

"You're wanted down thar," he said, with the jerk of a thumb over his shoulder. "The Tory officer wants to see ye."

"What officer? Captain Grant?"

"I reckon that's the one," indifferently; "anyhow I was told to fetch ye down thar. Bannister sent me."

I went as he directed down the rutty road, my newly appropriated horse trailing along behind. Grant was pacing back and forth restlessly, but, as soon as I appeared within the fire radius, he came toward me.

"Can I see you alone?" he asked brusquely.

"If there is any reason for privacy, certainly," I answered in surprise. "What do you wish to say?"

"This is a matter strictly between us," evasively. "I prefer not to discuss it publicly here."

I had a suspicion of treachery, yet was not willing to exhibit any reluctance.

"Very good. Bannister," to the partisan in charge, "I want a word with Captain Grant, and will be responsible for his safe return."

The man looked after us doubtfully, yet permitted us to pass beyond the guard lines. There was a stump beside the ford, barely within the flicker of the distant fire, and there I stopped, leaning against my horse, and turned so as to look into the man's face.

"Well, Grant," I said, rather sternly. "We are alone now; what is it?"

He cleared his throat, evidently uncertain how best to express himself.

"Why did you ask so many questions about Delavan's lieutenant?" he began sullenly. "What were you trying to find out?"

CHAPTER X.
A Capture.

What was the matter with the fellow? Could he have sent for me merely to ask that question, insisting on privacy? There must surely be some hidden purpose behind this. Yet if so, there was no betrayal in the man's face. His eyes had an angry gleam in them, and his words were shot at me in deadly earnest.

"The lieutenant?" I repeated, not prepared for a direct reply. "Why, I hardly know—curiosity largely."

He stared at me in manifest unbelief.

"What do you expect to gain by lying?" he exclaimed sullenly. "You saw him, no doubt, or you would not have asked what you did."

"Certainly I saw him," more deeply puzzled than before at his insistence. "That was what aroused my interest. He seemed such a mere lad as he rode past, and later I heard his voice, the voice of a boy."

"Was that all?"

"All! What else could you suppose? It was dark, only a little gleam of moon revealed outlines. I couldn't distinguish the face, but when he failed to appear after the fight I remembered him, and was afraid he had been hurt. Now I want to know what you mean. Who was the lad?"

He had seated himself on the stump, and was leaning forward, his face hidden from the light of the fire.

"Well, go on then," he returned finally. "If that's all you saw of him it's all right."

"No, it's not all right," I insisted, aroused by his peculiar actions. "What is all this mystery about? You told me you didn't know the man."

"I said I hadn't seen him, that we joined Delavan after dark," he corrected sharply. "But you needn't try to interview me, Major Lawrence," stiffening with anger, "for I haven't anything to say to a spy and leader of guerillas."

"If You Interfere in My Personal Affairs Again I Am Going to Kill You."

"You requested this interview; however, if you are satisfied I am, and you can return to your men. Shall I call the guard?"

He hesitated a moment, but whatever it was which had first inspired him to question me, was too strong to be thrown aside.

"Did—did Mistress Mortimer help you escape from Philadelphia?" he asked bluntly.

"That is entirely my affair. Why don't you ask the lady herself?"

"See here, damn you!" he burst out. "I haven't seen the lady. When I got back to the dining room she was gone, and then I was ordered out here. But you knew you were being sought after, and I cannot imagine who else told you."

"You do not exhibit very great faith in the lady—the daughter of a loyalist."

He drew a quick breath, suddenly aware that he had gone too far.

"It is your sneaking spy methods, not the girl. She is innocent enough, but I suspect you dragged the truth out of her. Now see here!" and his voice took on the tone of a bully. "You are in power just now, but you won't always be. You can't hold me prisoner; not with these ragamuffins. They'll turn us loose as soon as they loot those wagons. I know how they work in the Jerseys. But first I intend to tell you something it will be worth your while to remember. Claire Mortimer is going to be my wife—my wife. War is one thing, but if you interfere in my personal affairs again, I am going to kill you."

"Indeed," smilingly. "Is Mistress Mortimer aware of the honor you are according her?"

"She is aware of the engagement, if that is what you mean. It has been understood since our childhood."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Picture of Modern Life

Little Telephone Conversation Between Husband and Wife That Hits Off Modern Conditions.

Mr. Jones (at the telephone)—Hello, is that you, dear?

Mrs. Jones (at the other end)—Yes, Edward.

Mr. Jones—I won't be home for dinner tonight and probably not until very late afterward. Don't sit up for me.

Mrs. Jones—What is it, lodge night, or work at the office?

Mr. Jones—Neither. Collins and the gang want me to stay here at the club for dinner and there's to be a little game in the evening. I think I can bring home a few dollars to you for a new hat or something.

Mrs. Jones—Oh, very well. But if you lose, don't you dare say anything to me about what I dropped at bridge yesterday. And Edward—

Mr. Jones—Yes, dear.

Mrs. Jones—Come home moderately sober. Stick to beer. The last time you mixed 'em and you remember—it took two of your friends and a cop to bring you home. I won't be up when you come home—don't wake me.

"Breathing" of Machinery.

It has been pointed out that a piece of machinery, such as an automobile, laid aside after being used is in danger of internal rusting through a kind of respiration that affects cylinders, gear-boxes, clutch-chambers, interspaces in ball bearings, and so forth. Every inclosed air space, it appears, "breathes," drawing in air when a fall of temperature contracts its walls and expelling it when the walls expand through heat. The moisture introduced with the air is deposited in the cavities and may produce serious damage through rust. The popular notion that oil will protect the inaccessible parts of unused machinery is held by experts to be incorrect, since nearly all oils take up about three per cent of water in solution.

Strenuous Exercise.

They were talking about the value of regular physical exercise, and one of the group, noticing that Meredith Nicholson, the author, seemed pretty fit, asked him what he did to keep in condition.

"Who, me?" he exclaimed. "Why, I don't need any calisthenics or things of that sort. I live in a house on the sunset side of the street, and I get all the exercise my system needs in building the fire every morning."

"That doesn't seem to offer much chance for exercise," remarked a friend. "What kind of fire is it you build, wood or coal?"

"Neither," replied Nicholson. "We use gas, and I have to scratch a match every time I light the fire."

Dictaphone Not New.

The dictaphone which as been used in obtaining evidence in recent years is not altogether a new invention. The expression "Walls have ears" originated a long time ago when buildings were constructed having hidden tubes in the walls, so that what persons were saying in one room could be heard in another.

THE REMODELING OF MISS BETTIE BROWN

By HARVEY PEAKE.

Bettie Brown was sitting in the porch swing doing nothing when the postman brought the letter. These were Bettie's two greatest occupations; sitting and doing nothing. She usually combined the two.

Her pretty face resolved itself into a veritable interrogation mark, when she saw that the handwriting was Bob Taylor's.

"Why, I haven't heard from him for five years," she exclaimed, "not since he went to the Philippines after our quarrel; What can he have to say?" Tearing open the envelope she read:

"Manila, May 25th.

"My Dear Bettie:

"I am writing to say that I am going back to the United States on purpose to see you. I shall arrive in Brewster about the first of July. I hope that you will be glad to see me, for I can scarcely wait until I can see you.

"The silly misunderstanding we had has been wiped entirely out of my mind, and my greatest desire is to return and plead in person for your forgiveness, and also to ask you something more.

"I can see in my mind's eye your slim, willowy form in its sailor dress of blue. And I trust, dear Bettie, that you still have this identical dress, and will wear it to welcome me back. I think it was the prettiest dress I ever saw. If you will don it for this occasion it will make our meeting so much easier, for I shall know at a glance that I am forgiven if you have it on.

"Should there be any change in my plans I shall communicate with you at once. Do not make an effort to answer this letter for I shall be en route.

"Yours sincerely,

"Robert Taylor."

After Bettie had read the letter twice she fell into a reminiscent mood.

"Dear old Bob," she soliloquized, "how good it is to hear from you! And so you have something to say to me! I was ready to forgive and forget the next day, if you had only asked, for I loved you and still do.

"Of course I shall wear the blue dress. I'll—no, I can't either—I haven't had it on since he left! I began to take on flesh that same year. I weighed a hundred and ten when he saw me last and now—well, I know those last scales must have been wrong, for they made it a hundred and forty-eight!

"Goodness gracious, what shall I do? I can't begin to get it on and—my slim, willowy figure! That's what I get for sitting around so much and taking no exercise. And I remember that he hated fat girls! I will wear that dress!"

Immediately she constituted herself a committee of ways and means.

"Just five weeks in which to take off thirty-eight pounds!" she said.

The next morning at breakfast Bettie's father was full of trouble.

"I thought when I built this house, that I was putting up one of the most substantial residences in the town," he complained; "but last night, whenever a car passed, I distinctly felt it tremble, sometimes for as long as two minutes. And once it was shaken to its very foundations! I'm going to get the builder to come over, as soon as he can, to make an examination."

That evening Bettie's mother had something equally interesting to relate. Several times during the day she had thought she felt earthquake shocks, but upon looking out had seen only a calm and peaceful summer scene that did not reveal the slightest tendency to disturbances of this character.

Even Bobby was disturbed. He came running down stairs one morning a few days later, exclaiming:

"Mom, this house is hounted. I know it is, 'cause last night I heard the awfullest groans and moans after I went to bed, an' the house jest shook like it wus tremblin' with terror! I was afraid to git up an' I've been awake all night!"

One evening at tea, Mrs. Brown laid down her knife and fork and looking at her daughter, remarked:

"Now Bettie, I want to know what the matter is with you. You refuse preserves and cake, you won't take sugar in your tea, and you don't eat enough to keep a bird alive. You're actually getting thin and peaked! Why girl, you don't look like yourself; you've fallen away so much that your clothes are ever so much too big for you. Now what is it?"

"Oh nothing," answered Bettie.

"Yes there is. There's something wrong with you," replied her mother. "You needn't try to conceal it any longer. Either you are sick or in love. Now don't try to keep anything from your mother, for she has her suspicions. Those peculiar shakings and tremblings—I somehow believe you were at the bottom of them! Were you?"

"No I wasn't! I was at the top! I went up in the attic every time I rolled."

"Every time you rolled? What do you mean, child?"

"Well, if you are determined to pry into your daughter's private affairs, mother dear, I'll have to confess that I am reducing my flesh by the rolling process. You select a long floor space, you see, and roll back and forth twenty-five times without stopping. Then you kick up your heels——"

"Bettie Brown, are you crazy?"

"No, but I believe being in love is pretty nearly as bad as being crazy."

"Well, now I begin to see daylight," declared Mrs. Brown. "So you are in love, are you? I thought as much."

"It's Bob Taylor!" And then the whole story came out.

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After Bob had arrived, duly engaged himself to the willing Bettie, and taken his departure, the young woman in the case was in her room taking down her hair for the night, and recounting to herself the experiences of the past five weeks.

"I shouldn't have done it for anybody in the world but Bob," she declared; "but I don't intend that he shall ever know that I was so much in love with him that I bruised myself black and blue, from my shoulders to my heels, beside entirely upsetting the family calm, that he might be pleased with me. And as for the dress. I don't think he noticed the difference between the old and the new one even if there were two ulses difference!"

Recognize Value of Sports.

The scheme on which King George's children are educated includes careful instruction in all typical open air sports and games. Cricket, riding, fencing, boxing, shooting and the like the young prince of Wales has been carefully and scientifically taught by past masters.

Matrimony in Australia.

Bridegrooms in Australia last year ranged from sixteen to ninety-nine years of age, and the records show the youngest bride was fifteen, and the oldest eighty-two. One man of seventy-seven married a girl of eighteen. It is not surprising to learn that more marriages were reported from the country than ever before.

English Honors Cost Money.

The letter patent granted for the dignity of a baron cost £150, and for that of a baronet £100, payable to the board of inland revenue. Other expenses to be incurred by the newly-honored include crests or new coats-of-arms, while some wish to have their "genealogical trees" properly made out. Consequently the Heralds' college is busy after the issue of a list of honors, and the total expenses of a baron are not far short of £400, and those of a baronet exceed £200.

The Educational Step-Ladder.

We know what kindergarten is for: it is to educate children for the primary grades.

We know what the primary grades are for: they are to educate children for the grammar grades.

We know what the grammar grades are for; they are to educate children for high school.

We know what the high school is for: it is to educate children for college.

But what does college fit you for?—

Old Roman Wall Unearthed.

A part of the wall which once enclosed old St. Paul's, London, has been discovered in excavations at the corner of Paternoster Row and St. Paul's alley in London. The wall, which is about 60 feet long, is made of chalk and rubble, and was built in the twelfth century. On the same site pieces of a Roman amphora, Roman vases and some Samian ware have also been found. Other "finds" include a camel's skull unearthed in High Holborn and a large quantity of pipes of the eighteenth century. Under some old stables in Bartholomew Close—one of the oldest parts of London—three Norman arches have been found. They are close to one another, and are believed to have formed part of the cloisters of the priory which once stood on this site.